



Aruba's Orchid Society gave the gift of beauty for the holiday weekend

Celebrating their 35th anniversary, the Aruba Orchid Society joined with Flora Market, also celebrating ten years in business, to present their latest collection of beautiful blooms to the public. Society President Lili Beke and members were present at the home décor center to explain to an admiring public the intricacies of orchid horticulture. Many came to admire the stunning variety and color of this legendary flower over the weekend. Dr. Beke expressed that this show was "The Society's gift of beauty to the Aruban people," something for which they would usually charge an entry fee. Additionally entertaining the children of the families that came to enjoy an afternoon at Flora Market were the Clown Doctors, with face painting and fun activities.

There is no doubt that a number of people were converted into orchid enthusiasts, and Flora Market offered a selection of what could be considered "beginners' orchids" at reasonable prices. For the more experienced, blue ribbons were awarded for prize specimens in five categories amongst the hybrids, and three for pure strains of orchid species. President Beke took home the prize the best ONC Stipitatum, one of the pure strains, and the other two were for ENC Cordigera and CTNA Why Not "Roundabout," which certainly might cause one to wonder who thinks of some of these orchid names and precisely what inspires them. Best hybrid awards went for the Vanda, Cattleya, Dendrobium, Oneidium and Phalaenopsis.

Past President and now Secretary of the Orchid Society, Merrill Robles, who has authored a book on cultivating orchids in Aruba, also offered expert advice on how to care for the plants. Aside from the many exotic and brilliantly colored species was also found a beautiful sample of the orchid native to Aruba and the region called *Brassavola Nodosa* from which a lovely hybrid was cultivated by Russ Ewing, an employee of the Lago Refinery, in 1950, and registered with the Royal Horticultural Society under the name *Brassoepidendrum Arubiana*.

The members also sold a birthday calendar from with photographs of many stunning blooms, which make a perfect gift and souvenir of Aruba. The calendar is for taking note of annual special events and never goes out of date. If you wish more information about the Aruba Orchid Society, the calendar, or to arrange purchasing one, contact members at: sociedadiorquidiaaruba@yahoo.com.